Automotive News

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Project Saturn

GM unveils billion-dollar subcompact

In an unusual move, GM last week unveiled what it has called its 'No-Year' subcompact, codenamed Project Saturn, that will be built in the U. S. in the late 1980s. Slightly smaller than a Cavalier, it will incorporate new manufacturing and product concepts including modular construction and space-saving seating. The $1-billion-plus car will appear first as a Chevrolet.

New-car dealer count up by 94 for third quarter

By John K. Teahen Jr.
Managing Editor

For a while at least, the frightful attrition in the ranks of domestic auto dealers has ended.

In the third quarter of this year, the manufacturers showed a net gain of 94 outlets to bring the total to 20,817 on Oct. 1, the quarterly AUTOMOTIVE NEWS census disclosed.

It was by far the biggest gain in the 22 years that AUTOMOTIVE NEWS has been tabulating dealer totals on a quarterly basis, and it was only the sixth time in those 22 years that there has been any upturn at all for a three-month period.

The gain is even more impressive when compared with last year's loss of 303 outlets in the July-September span.

Although quarter-by-quarter figures are not available for years prior to 1962, it is a certainty that 94-outlet advance has not been topped since 1955. That was the last full year that the domestic industry showed a gain — 644 for the 12 months.

Chrysler Corp. led the way in the third quarter with an increase of 73 dealerships. Ford Motor Co. added 30 to its total, and American Motors-Renault was up 13.

There were dips of 25 for General Motors and five for Volkswagen. A change in the number of intercorporate duals brought the gain to 94 for the domestic industry.

All figures in this article and the accompanying tables refer to the net change in the dealer population, both for the individual corporations and car lines and for the domestic industry as a whole.

• The third-quarter bonanza put the industry on the plus side for the first nine months of this year. The Oct. 1 count of 20,817 is up 18 from the 20,799 dealerships in operation on Jan. 1. Once again, it was a gold-star event that hasn't happened since 1955. Last year, the first nine months showed a plunge of 859 locations.

Chrysler Corp. was the big winner with the addition of 161 car outlets, and Ford Motor picked up 40. There were dips of 100 for GM, 35 for AMC-Renault and 24 for VW. Factoring in the change in intercorporate duals gave the industry a gain of 18.

The figures for the 1983 model year were not quite as good as those for the periods mentioned above, but they were eminently acceptable in view of what's been happening in recent seasons.

The latest total of 20,817 domestic dealerships is down 80 from the 20,897 doing business on Oct. 1, 1982.

Another loss, to be sure, but the dip was minimal when compared with declines of 1,643 dealerships in the 1980 model year, 758 in 1981 and 1,267 in 1982.

Chrysler Corp. almost turned things around all by itself with a gain of 169 outlets for the '83 model year. Ford Motor wound up exactly even for the period, and there were drops of 170 for GM, 39 for VW and 26 for AMC-Renault. A change in intercorporate duals made the downturn 80 for the industry.

While the foregoing figures

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U. S. CAR OUTLETS

	Oct. 1, 1983	Oct. 1, 1982
American Motors-Renault	1,554	1,580
Chrysler Corp.	3,798	3,629
Ford Motor Co.	5,454	5,454
General Motors	10,060	10,230
Volkswagen	910	949
TOTALS	21,776	21,842
Minus Intercorporate Duals	959	945
NET DEALERS	20,817	20,897

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breaking news

Steed confirmed

WASHINGTON. — The Senate has confirmed Diane Steed to be the Administrator of the NHTSA, succeeding Raymond A. Peck who left last May. Before joining NHTSA as Peck's deputy, Steed was with the Office of Management and Budget. Also recently confirmed by the Senate is Courtney M. Price as Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring for EPA. Price had been Associate Administrator for Rulemaking at NHTSA.

Flush headlamps

DEARBORN. — All upcoming Ford Motor Co. passenger cars, as well as future

See BREAKING NEWS, Page 8, Col. 1

An unprecedented peek at corporation's high-tech Japan-beater

GM unveils down-the-road 'no-year' small car

By Kathleen Hamilton
Financial Editor

General Motors' much-ballyhooed 'No-Year' car—the high-technology, U. S.-made subcompact that is supposed to beat the Japanese in costs—was unveiled in clay form last week at the GM Technical Center in Warren, Mich.

It was perhaps a unique announcement for GM: Top executives posed with models of a car that is at least three years away from production.

They outlined production, management, engineering and product advances developed for the $1-billion-plus project—advances that are expected to be adopted for other GM cars and result in a major overhaul of GM operations.

GM executives said Project Saturn also will reshape assembly workers' roles and tasks. An "historic" announcement by GM and the UAW is due within weeks, outlining how they will work together, GM President F. James McDonald said.

Chevrolet will get the car first. Initially, it will be a four-door sedan. A coupe and a sports utility vehicle will follow, McDonald said.

Ten inches shorter than J-cars Cavalier, Skyhawk, 2000, Sunbird, Firenza and Cimarron, it will have about the same interior space that they have and weigh 400 pounds less.

The Project Saturn car also will be much cheaper to produce, according to GM Chairman Roger B. Smith. It will cost less than even the GM-Toyota joint venture car, Smith said. It will be marketed downscale from both that car and the Cavalier.

Body panels probably will be both steel and plastic, GM Vice Chairman Howard Kehrl said.

The engine will be a fuel-injected four-cylinder water-cooled gasoline powerplant, with both aluminum heads and block cast using the precise lost-foam technique used by Oldsmobile for its diesel V-6.

The method is expected to reduce machining 40 percent.

Although the GM executives declined to get very specific on the engine program, citing competitive reasons, McDonald said the latest in combustion-chamber advances will help make the engine the most advanced on the market at launch time. Fuel economy is expected to be in the range of 45 MPG city, 60 highway.

Saturn's rear axle will require one-eighth the amount of MIG welding as a conventional rear axle for a front-drive car, saving considerable money, Smith said.

Kehrl outlined plans for two transaxles: A five-speed manual and an electronically controlled four-speed automatic with overdrive that will be "significantly less costly than today's designs."

Both may be built in a single plant for flexibility in case of market shifts, McDonald said.

GM will make use of a second-generation space frame similar to the one first used in the

Continued on Page 8, Col. 1

Local-content measure is passed by House

By Geoff Sundstrom
Washington Reporter

WASHINGTON.—The UAW-backed local-content bill was passed by the House of Representatives last week in much stronger form than last year's measure. The vote was 219 in favor of the measure, 199 against.

The bill appears to have little chance of passage in the Senate.

A crucial moment in the bill's consideration came when Rep. Dan Coats, Indiana Republican, offered an amendment on behalf of the import auto dealers.

The amendment would have substantially weakened the bill by tying its enforcement to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and dismantling the measure if it led to retaliation by foreign nations against U. S. exports.

A similar amendment was added to last year's bill by a single vote. It was widly interpreted as rendering the bill ineffective.

Once the Coats amendment was defeated, the bill sped to rapid approval by the House. The legislators paused only long

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ACO EDITOR
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CONGRESSIONAL INFO SERV
4520 EAST-WEST HWY STE800
BETHESDA MD 20814

Makers cling to security blankets with November incentive programs

By Joseph Bohn
Marketing Editor

Auto companies are doing well, but still prefer to hold onto some sales security blankets during November.

GM extended its 12.9 percent financing program through the end of this month. Ford, Chrysler and American Motors followed with similar extensions.

Ford and Chrysler also extended a slew of special incentive programs.

American Motors has a new incentive coming up in December.

General Motors Acceptance Corp. extended its 12.9 percent financing on new '83 and '84 cars and trucks through Nov. 30. The unadvertised rate is available for dealers to use at their discretion.

Ford Motor Credit countered by extending its 12.9 percent offer for a month in five Western States. They are California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii.

At Ford Division, the rate has been extended to cover all new models except Crown Victoria and Mustang, and all new trucks, except Econoline vans and Club Wagons.

Ford Division also extended a salesmen's cash program for 10 days only — to Nov. 10. Under the program, salesmen can earn $75 for each '83 or '84 Escort, Thunderbird or Ranger, '84 Tempo or '83/'84 2WD/4WD F-150 equipped with a manual transmission.

The $75 salesmen's offer on F-150 trucks with manual transmission was extended for the whole month.

An override payment to sales managers, based on what salesmen earn, was dropped, however, effective Nov. 1.

A program paying dealers $500 on '83 Mustangs and $700 on '83 Mustang convertibles (the amounts are $700 and $900, respectively, in five Western states), has also been extended for the whole of November.

Lincoln-Mercury similarly extended a salesmen's cash incentive on '83/'84 Topaz, Cougar and Lynx through Nov. 10. It pays $75 on each model.

Again, dealer cash payments of $500 on '83 Capri ($700 in five Western states; there is no Capri convertible) has been extended for the whole of November.

And 12.9 percent financing, offered through Ford Motor Credit, was extended for five Western states only on all models except the Grand Marquis and the luxury lines. The '84 Capri is included in this extention, which runs through all of November.

Chrysler Credit is also offering 12.9 percent on all new '83 and '84 vehicles through Nov. 30, regardless of contract length. (This is the same as before.)

Chrysler also extended its '83 model closeout program, offering a variety of dealer cash incentives on '83 cars and trucks, to Dec. 31.

For each retail sale or lease of eligible vehicles, dealers get the following amounts: $200 on Omni, Horizon, Turismo, Charger, LeBaron and Dodge 400. The Shelby Charger is worth $400.

Reliant and Aries pay $100. Chrysler E-Class, Dodge 600, New Yorker front drive, Cordoba and Mirada pay $500; Imperial, $700; Scamp and Rampage, $300; Voyager, $400 and Ram 2WD and 4WD, $400.

AMC, like GM and Ford, is offering 12.9 percent on contracts up to 48 months during November through American Motors Credit only. All new '83 and '84 AMC Jeep and Renault vehicles are included.

American Motors has a Dec. 1-31 dealer incentive on Renault Fuego, based on units retailed and delivered. It pays $300 on regular Fuego models and $1,000 on Fuego Turbo models.

Rear-engined sportster

Aragona Motor Vehicles, Mendon, Mass., displayed the Brasilia at the South Florida Auto Show, which opened at the Miami Beach Convention Center. The American-designed, Brazilian-made coupe has an air-cooled rear engine and features leather interior, tinted glass and four-wheel disk brakes. The price is $13,828.

Lean steps down at 56 from high Toyota post

By Matt DeLorenzo
Los Angeles Reporter

TORRANCE, Calif. — Norman D. Lean, who has played a vital role in Toyota's success in this country, retired Nov. 1 as senior vice president and chief operating officer of Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.

Lean's retirement came just over a month after the departure of TMS/USA President Isao Makino, who was replaced by Yukiyaso Togo.

Norman D. Lean

"Everybody's got to retire sometime and my view is sooner is better than later," Lean told Automotive News. "I knew I'd be retiring sooner or later, the timing just seemed to be appropriate with this change (of presidents)."

The early retirement came as a surprise since Lean is 56 years old. However, sources inside the company said there were differences between Lean and the new president.

Togo, unlike his predecessor who preferred to work in the background, is likely to take an active and visible role in running the U. S. operation, as he did in his previous position as head of Toyota's Canadian subsidiary.

Togo reportedly has a good command of English and feels comfortable in direct control of the company, as well as acting as chief spokesman.

As a result, no replacement for Lean has been named, nor does it seem likely that one will be named soon.

"It's my understanding in talking with Mr. Togo that he intends to handle all of those operational jobs that I had directly," Lean said.

"I think his intent, at least for the short term, is that that will give him a very good orientation into what's going on. He'll get to know all the senior management very directly and become familiar with all the aspects of the operations."

Other management changes may come around the first of the year, when the company traditionally announces reorganizations and title changes.

The last such announcement was made Jan. 1, 1982, when Lean was named senior vice president and chief operating officer, a promotion from his previous post of vice president-operations.

• Lean joined Toyota in 1969 as national service manager, coming from Ford Motor Co. He became national sales manager in 1972 and was promoted to vice president, general operations, the following year.

Toyota was on a roll in the late '60s and beyond. It sold only 2,986 cars in the U. S. in 1965, rose to 17,423 the following year and was up to 127,018 in 1969 when Lean came aboard.

In 1972, his first as sales chief, sales were 295,915. Toyota's all-time high was 582,204 in 1980. The numbers have tailed off a bit since then because of Japan's export restrictions.

Truck sales have been rising in recent years. They set a record of 144,308 in 1982 and almost matched that total in the

Continued on Page 6, Col. 1

1.85-million Japan cap rapped by both sides

By Geoff Sundstrom
Washington Reporter

WASHINGTON.—Japan's decision to limit its U. S. auto exports for a fourth year at the increased 1.85-million-car level drew immediate criticism from all quarters of the U. S. auto industry last week.

The negative reaction occurred despite a final figure that is substantially below Japan's earlier expressed desire for a 2-million-car quota.

The original three-year arrangement called for an annual ceiling of 1.68 million cars. It expires March 31, 1984.

Upon reaching agreement on the new voluntary restraint number, Susoke Uno, Japanese Minister of International Trade and Industry, and U. S. Trade Representative Bill Brock, described the understanding as a "transitional" measure to ensure full recovery in the American auto industry.

But U. S. and Japanese auto makers appeared worried over how the new agreement, with its 170,000 additional Japanese imports, would be allocated. In the past, the allocation system worked out between MITI and the Japanese car industry was based on historical market shares with little room for flexibility.

Now, with General Motors asking for 290,000 small Japanese imports from Suzuki and Isuzu and with Mitsubishi and Toyo Kogyo pushing for greater U. S. market shares, MITI may have to restructure its quota portions.

GM appeared to be hoping for just such a reapportionment, saying the company's arrangement with Isuzu and Suzuki "should not be penalized by staying with export allocation formulas that are now outdated."

Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca responded by again threatening to scrap production plans for the P-car replacement for Omni/Horizon, if GM brings over all of its Japanese imports.

Robert McElwaine, president of the American International Automobile Dealers Assn., said that if GM dealers get the additional Japanese cars, his group would "pursue every avenue open to us under the Sherman Antitrust Act to overturn such a discriminatory apportionment."

Ford Motor Co. Chairman Philip Caldwell said his company is "disappointed to see any increase in Japanese auto exports at a time of continuing high U. S. unemployment and record high U. S. trade deficits with Japan."

Takashi Ishihara, president of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Assn., said the three-year agreement had already achieved its purpose and that the new agreement should be for one year only. He described the new restraint as "unsatisfactory, but inevitable." Ishihara is also president of Nissan Motor Co.

• But the individual Japanese car companies were divided in their reactions, according to Kyodo News Service of Japan. Toyoo Tate, president of Mitsubishi Motors Corp., said his company is dissatisfied with the new quota, which he said was smaller than expected.

Toshio Okamoto, president of Isuzu Motors, Ltd., also expressed strong dissatisfaction, saying the new restraint would adversely affect Isuzu's plans to supply 100,000 small cars annually to GM.

However, officials of the larger Japanese car companies, which enjoy relatively large shares of the present quota,

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Domestics gain 36 percent; imports up 16 percent

New-car sales surge in October

By Jenny L. King
Staff Writer

New-car sales during the first month of the 1984 model year surged ahead with substantial gains for both domestic and imports.

The U. S. auto makers had their greatest year-to-year gain for a month since June. Imports, though up 16.48 percent, lost several percentage points in shares of the market, dropping to 22.80 percent from 25.66 percent.

Domestic new-car sales in October climbed 36.14 percent, to 664,194 from 487,871. It was their best monthly gain since the 48.01-percent explosion last June, and brought to eight the number of consecutive months in which sales have been up compared with 1982 levels. The chain of 10-day periods with increases was extended to 16.

Imports were up 16.48 percent, to 196,124 from 168,379. The combined total for October of 860,318 was up 31.10 percent from 656,250.

Year-to-date sales for the domestics pulled 18.84 percent ahead of 1982, moving to 5,645,252 from 4,750,466. Import sales for the 10 months were up 8.06 percent, to 2,000,626 from 1,851,404. Industry total this year was 7,645,878, up 15.81 percent from 6,601,870.

Where auto market was in October

	Total Sales	Pct. of Total
SUBCOMPACT	109,071	12.68
COMPACT	143,867	16.72
INTERMEDIATE	252,147	29.31
STANDARD	106,866	12.42
LUXURY	52,243	6.07
IMPORT	196,124	22.80
TOTAL	860,318	100.00

• Ford Motor Co. led the U. S. auto makers in October with a dazzling 41.94-percent sales increase. Ford reported sales of 150,340 this year compared with 105,918 in 1982. General Motors was next-best with a 38.43-percent jump, to 410,177 from 296,317.

Chrysler Corp. sales were up 14.79 percent, to 75,938 from 66,156. American Motors turned in a total of 15,344, up 20.61 percent from its year-ago 12,722. Volkswagen was up 6.19 percent, to 7,176 from 6,758, and

Four-wheel steering, ceramic gas turbine and plenty of other goodies

Japanese idea cars display high-tech at Tokyo show

By John Hartley
Staff Correspondent

TOKYO.—Idea cars, intended to burnish a high-tech image for Japan, were the sensations of the Tokyo Motor Show, with several from Toyota and one each from Nissan and Mazda.

In addition, Nissan's new Bluebird, Toyota's front-drive four-door Corona and Mitsubishi's rebodied Mirage (Colt in the U.S.) made their debuts, while a number of prototypes of cars due to go into production soon—such as the Subaru one-liter front-drive hatchback—were on display.

Although Toyota showed the most idea cars, it was Toyo Kogyo's Mazda MX-02 that produced the most innovative design, featuring steering at both front and rear wheels. And the MX-02, unlike some concept cars, is a practical vehicle with room for five people.

With an overall length of 177 inches and a width of 66.7 inches, it is about the same size as a typical European or Japanese two-liter car. However, the wheelbase is 110 inches, about the same as a typical three-liter car.

The long wheelbase provides plenty of legroom, while with the four-wheel steering the car is easy to park and responds like a small car at higher speeds. The front and rear wheels steer parallel to each other at low speeds and on the opposite locks at high speeds.

• Toyota's FX-1 has a twin-turbo engine and variable valve timing in a sleek coupe body, which like Mazda's MX-02 and Nissan's NX-21 has flush glass.

The FX-1 also features a hydropneumatic suspension with electronic control of damping and spring rate. A number of parts are made of ceramic materials.

Ceramic parts were also to be found in several internal components on an Isuzu 1.8-liter diesel and in a Mitsubishi prototype turbocharger.

Inside the Nissan NX-21 concept car was a ceramic gas turbine engine, with output of 100 HP. The combustor, turbine wheels and housing are all made of ceramic materials. The NX-21 is a low-slung coupe with sharply sloping hood and flush-fitting headlamps.

Toyota also showed an off-road runabout with one front and two rear seats. Also at the Toyota display was the SV-3 mid-engine coupe, due to be launched next year.

Also showing upcoming models were Subaru, which displayed a pre-production version of the one-liter hatchback it will introduce next year, and Daihatsu, which showed its Rugger off-road vehicle, also due to be launched next year.

Mitsubishi introduced its rebodied Colt hatchback and sedan, while Nissan unveiled its Bluebird (Maxima in the U.S.) front-drive model. The Colt is completely new in appearance, while the Maxima is similar in appearance to the old model.

Also on the Mitsubishi stand was the Starion four-wheel-drive rally car, to be marketed next year. The car is powered by a new version of the Sirius two-liter engine with three valves per cylinder and rated at 350 HP.

Iacocca welcomes a new star

Lee A. Iacocca, Chrysler Corp. chairman, introduced the company's new mini-vans at ceremonies last week at the Windsor (Ont.) assembly plant. He's shown with the Plymouth Voyager wagon. Other models are the Dodge Caravan wagon and Dodge Mini Ram, a commercial van.

Iacocca says mini-van 'will make history'

By Jack Walsh
Truck Editor

WINDSOR, Ont. — Chrysler Corp.'s all-new mini-vans — family wagons and a panel van — "will make automotive history," Lee A. Iacocca, chairman, proclaimed last week at production-launch ceremonies in the state-of-the-art Windsor assembly plant.

He predicted the wagons — Plymouth Voyager and Dodge Caravan — will be to the '80s what the Ford Mustang was to the '60s, "vehicles that create extraordinary excitement and buyer interest and force other manufacturers to come up with copycat versions."

Iacocca noted that the Mustang, whose development he led as Ford Division general manager, "became both a sales legend and a classic car in its own time," and he added:

"I feel that our mini-vans will do all of that, too. The design, frankly, is more revolutionary than the Mustang was."

Development of the front-wheel-drive minis cost Chrysler $660 million, compared with $100 million for the Mustang, Iacocca said.

The mini-van, which will be

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Wants GM to inform owners of alleged brake defect

U.S. asks for X-body escrow fund

By Helen Kahn
Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON. — The U.S. Government has asked a federal court to require General Motors to inform owners of 1980 X-body cars of the nature of the alleged brake defect and to offer to reimburse them for repairs if it loses the current court case.

Also included in the motion for preliminary injunction is a request that Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson require GM to establish an escrow fund of at least $50 million to reimburse X-car owners for repairs made to fix the allegedly defective brakes during pendency of the suit.

In Judge Jackson's written order of Oct. 19 — when he allowed release of GM documents which NHTSA had subpenaed from the company and which the government maintains is the basis of its defect case — GM was given until Nov. 20 to file its opposition to the government's move for summary judgment, made on Sept. 13.

Oral argument was set for Jan. 11. Involved are some 1.1 million 1980 X-body cars.

Because of delay in GM response and because winter is approaching and corrosion in the front brakes (which may be aggravated by salt on the roadways) is one of the causes of rear brake lockup, the government feels notifying owners is important.

It is asking the court to make GM notify owners of the government allegations, describe the alleged causes so consumers can take remedial action, set up an escrow fund of at least $50 million that might be used and tell owners that GM will pay if

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Crain Communications buys city magazine

DETROIT. — Crain Communications, publisher of AUTOMOTIVE NEWS and 18 other special-interest publications, last week acquired Monthly Detroit, a metropolitan magazine with a circulation of about 40,000.

The magazine was purchased for an undisclosed sum from the Cleveland-based City Magazines, Inc. Keith E. Crain, AUTOMOTIVE NEWS publisher and editorial director, will be Monthly Detroit editor-in-chief.

Prinz dies at 54; Daimler-Benz chief

STUTTGART, West Germany. — Dr. Gerhard Prinz, chairman of Daimler-Benz AG, died of a heart attack at his home here Oct. 29. He was 54.

He had been chairman of Daimler-Benz since January, 1980, and had been with the company since 1974 when he joined the board of management and became responsible for the firm's worldwide purchasing activities.

Dr. Prinz was with Volkswagen from 1967 to 1973 and was a member of the VW board responsible for all German and foreign subsidiaries and affiliates. In 1972-'73, he was chairman of the board of Audi NSU Auto-Union AG.

Dr. Prinz was born in Solingen, Germany. He studied law and had a short career as an attorney before being attracted to industry, where he became a management trainee in the German steel industry for the European Coal and Steel Community in 1958.

In 1960, he became the assistant to the board chairman of Kloeckner-Werke in Duisburg. Three years later he joined the German branch of Brown, Boveri & Cie in Mannheim. He was there until 1967, when he went to Volkswagen.

Dr. Prinz served on the supervisory boards of several German companies and was a member of the Foreign Trade and Payments Council advising the German Federal Minister of Economic Affairs.

Peterson says he was threatened with non-renewal; too many orders?

$49-over dealer attacks Fiero allocations

By Richard A. Wright
Assistant Managing Editor

John Peterson, owner of Peterson Motors, a full-line General Motors dealer in Lake City, Minn., and possessor of the highest profile among the 17 so-called "$49-over" dealers in the U.S., is continuing his assault on GM's new-car distribution system and said he has received a non-renewal threat for his troubles.

Peterson said he has received a letter from a GM lawyer accusing him of "engaging in abuse and harassment" of GM employes and informing him that that is grounds for non-renewal of the franchise agreement, or even termination.

While the letter was simply stating corporate policy, Peterson said he regards it as a warning. Peterson's Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, Oldsmobile and Cadillac franchise agreements run out in October, 1985.

Factories are not always eager to fill the orders of $49-over dealers, although policy is spotty in this regard, indicating that there probably is no policy at the divisional level.

The 17 dealers in the U.S. currently using the $49-over system of selling new cars—including Peterson—are disciples of Howard Van Bortel, who devised the system while a GM dealer in Palmyra, N.Y., which eventually led to his termination and, he says, a nice settlement from GM.

The system is basically this: The dealer sells all cars at factory invoice price plus $49. Customers see the invoice prices and pick their options. It's all added up and $49 is tacked on.

The dealer makes his profit through two factory policies, the 3 percent holdback, which is included in the invoice price, and the 20-day floorplan subsidy credit, which goes at least partially to the dealer because $49-over dealers carry no inventory of cars. All orders are sold orders.

Van Bortel, who exuberantly admits to being a thorn in GM's side, said he has had numerous inquiries from dealers interested in the program since AUTOMOTIVE NEWS began chronicling Peterson's arguments with Detroit. He said 50 dealers want to meet with him and another 70 have expressed interest.

Actually, Peterson's arguments have been mainly with Oldsmobile and Cadillac, which have consistently refused to build most of his orders. Buick, on the other hand, has built all his orders and, for the most part, so have Chevrolet and Pontiac, with a few exceptions.

One of those exceptions is the Fiero. Peterson said he has sold and ordered 70 Fieros. When he queried Pontiac as to when he could expect them, he was told that under the current distribution setup he could have only

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